



MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

FROM:  Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Executive Officer

DATE: June 1, 2005

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item VII: Consideration of resolution authorizing entering into a contract with Connex Transit, Inc., for the parkLINK park shuttle demonstration project (formerly known as Heart of the Park), pursuant to a Request for Proposals.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution authorizing entering into a contract with Connex Transit, Inc., for the parkLINK park shuttle demonstration project.

Background: The parkLINK Park Shuttle Demonstration Project is the new name for the joint MRCA, National Park Service, Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, California Department of Parks and Recreation, and Los Angeles County Beaches and Harbors park shuttle demonstration project, formerly known as the Heart of the Park Shuttle. The previous MRCA contract with MV Transportation for implementation of the service was cancelled by that contractor in early March just prior to the planned-for start of service, and prior to incurring any invoices. Nearly all the funding granted to the MRCA by the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy remains in place for this new contract, and will be augmented by additional funds from the National Park Service (see Agenda Item VIII).

The project is to provide park access and transportation alternatives to Santa Monica Mountains parklands. The project is to demonstrate increased accessibility, enhanced visitor experience and resource protection of parklands in the National Recreation Area. The service is to be provided on a fixed route, using five new clean diesel buses purchased and owned by the National Park Service. The buses can accommodate 20 passengers plus two wheelchair users, and have rear storage for gear and a triple bike rack. The service will operate on weekends and holidays, and stop at nine developed sites including Malibu Creek State Park, Tapia State Park, Malibu Lagoon State Beach, Solstice Canyon, Zuma Beach, two Backbone Trail trailheads, Peter Strauss Ranch, and Paramount Ranch. Two flag stops shared with the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transit Authority in Malibu Village and

Corral Canyon are also on the route. Fares will be collected and used to offset the cost of operation, which is to be for up to 18 months of service. NPS has constructed and installed new shuttle stops, with interpretive materials. Drivers will be trained to provide additional interpretive and general information about the mountain parks.

A new Request for Proposals was advertised in April, posted on the MRCA website, and packages mailed to a list of transportation providers. Three proposals were received from Connex Transit, Inc., Durham Transportation, and Laidlaw Transit Services, Inc. by the May 6 deadline. A bid committee comprised of personnel from MRCA, the Conservancy, the National Park Service, and State Parks reviewed the proposals and conducted interviews on May 12. Proposals were evaluated with points awarded on a point scale basis, 70% on their operational plan, experience and qualifications and 30% on the total operating costs.

Connex Transit, Inc. had the highest point totals and was notified of its status as contractor that would be recommended for the MRCA contract. The bid cost is \$302,336 based on their hourly rate of \$50.69, and the estimated 5,965 revenue hours of service over an 18 month period. The company is an international transit provider with a Los Angeles regional headquarters, and has current local contracts with the LADOT for Dash, CityRide, and Commuter Express buses, and with Metrolink. Follow-up references from across the country gave excellent reviews.

Connex staff have been working with NPS and MRCA staff on start-up activities for the past three weeks, in anticipation of a signed contract by early June, with a contract service start date of June 28. The public service is set to begin on July 2 with a pending press kickoff event planned. Staff recommends that the Governing Board authorize staff to finalize the contract terms and conditions and enter into the contract with Connex Transit, Inc.